

Message Text

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15

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2174

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 986

LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PFOR, SCUL, US

SUBJECT: ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL

FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY ROGERS FROM AMBASSADOR

REF: STATE 31554, SANTIAGO 902

1. YOU HAVE OUR REPORT, FROM THIS END, CONCERNING THE FEB 10 MEETING WITH PRESIDENT PINOCHET ON THE ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL MATTER. ESSENTIALLY, IT DOES NOT DIFFER FROM WHAT FATHER LEWERS TOLD YOU (STATE REFTEL). FROM SAD EXPERIENCE, THE HOLY CROSS CONGREGATION HAS LEARNED NOT TO PUT ITS TRUST IN THE GOC'S ORAL STATEMENTS.

2. WHEN I SAW FONMIN CARVAJAL FEB 12, I TOLD HIM I UNDERSTOOD ENCOURAGING DEVELOPMENTS HAD TAKEN PLACE IN THE FEB 10 MEETING, AND THAT HIS HELPFUL ATTITUDE HAD BEEN APPRECIATED. CARVAJAL SAID HE THOUGHT MEETING HAD GONE WELL. UNFORTUNATELY, THOUGH THERE HAD BEEN SIGNS OF PROGRESS IN THE PAST, THERE HAD BEEN ALL TOO MUCH DELAY WHILE LETTERS WERE EXCHANGED AND POSITIONS HARDENED. CARVAJAL THOUGHT THE APPOINTMENT OF JULIO PHILIPPI AS "MEDIATOR" WOULD SERVE TO AVOID THIS SORT OF THING IN FUTURE. PHILIPPI WOULD DO HIS BEST TO REACH AN EQUITABLE SOLUTION.

3. IN COURSE OF CONVERSATION, I REMARKED THAT IF MATTER
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WERE NOT SETTLED, IT COULD BECOME A NEEDLESSLY IRRITATING

PROBLEM IN OUR RELATIONS. SAID I WAS GLAD PHILIPPI WAS ENTERING PICTURE, SINCE WE KNEW FROM HIS WORK ON THE COPPER SETTLEMENTS THAT HE WAS A MAN OF OUTSTANDING INTEGRITY AND ABILITY.

4. WE HAVE OFTEN TOLD GOC THAT FAILURE TO REACH A SATISFACTORY SETTLEMENT OF ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL PROBLEM COULD RESULT IN VERY SERIOUS DIFFICULTIES FOR CHILE IN THE UNITED STATES. IN ADDITION, FATHER HESBURGH'S LETTER TO PINOCHET OF SEPTEMBER 30 (SANTIAGO 6785) MADE THE POINT VERY CLEARLY. CHILEANS ARE THUS IN NO DOUBT WHATEVER AS TO THIS ASPECT OF PROBLEM. IN FAIRNESS TO THEM, IT MUST BE SAID THAT SOME OF THEIR FOOT DRAGGING IS MOTIVATED BY THEIR REAL SUSPICION AS TO AIMS OF AT LEAST SOME MEMBERS OF HOLY CROSS ORDER. FOR WHAT THEY CONSIDER VERY GOOD REASONS, SANTIAGO HOLY CROSS FATHERS HAVE IN PAST RESISTED EFFORTS OF GOVERNMENT TO ENSURE THAT ST. GEORGE'S SCHOOL CURRICULUM WILL BE CONSONANT WITH THAT OF THE COUNTRY'S EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AS A WHOLE. THEY HAVE RESISTED GOC DESIRE TO ENSURE THAT CERTAIN HOLY CROSS TEACHERS, SOME OF WHOM WENT VERY FAR IN SUPPORT OF UP AND ITS OBJECTIVES BEFORE 1973, SHOULD NOT BE RETURNED TO SCHOOL. IN PURSUING HOLY CROSS PLAN TO GIVE TUITION CONCESSIONS TO STUDENTS OF POORER FAMILIES, THE ORDER PROVOKED STRONG OPPOSITION FROM MANY, PERHAPS MOST, OF MEMBERS OF SCHOOL'S PARENTS ASSOCIATION, AS WELL AS GOVERNMENT.

5. HAVING SAID ALL THE FOREGOING, IT IS NEVERTHELESS TRUE THAT MINISTER OF EDUCATION ADMIRAL CASTRO AND HIS DESIGNATED SCHOOL ADMINISTRATOR CDTE. VERDUGO APPROACHED THE WHOLE PROBLEM LIKE MARTINETS AND WOULD IF THEY COULD DISPOSE OF IT BY SIMPLY EXPROPRIATING THE SCHOOL AND PUTTING IN A STAFF THEY CONSIDER COMPLETELY RELIABLE. FORTUNATELY, THEIR VIEWS ARE NOT SHARED BY PRESIDENT PINOCHET OR, FOR THAT MATTER, FONMIN CARVAJAL, JUST AS THE VIEWS OF SOME OF THE HOLY CROSS FATHERS IN SANTIAGO ARE NOT SHARED BY THE PAPAL NUNCIO HERE OR BY CONGREGATION LEADERS IN THE UNITED STATES.

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6. I THINK THAT WITH PHILIPPI INVOLVED THE PROSPECTS FOR A REASONABLE SETTLEMENT ARE MUCH IMPROVED. WE SHALL CONTINUE TO TRY TO BE HELPFUL.
POPPER

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